

# It doesn't get any better

## Holdgate named MSSADA Athletic Director of The Year

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The people of Duxbury expect the best from their town when it comes to education, sports, and quality of life. Therefore, the next time you get an urge to cast a stone at the administration of the DHS sports program, your complaints may fall on deaf ears.

Why do you ask?

Just ask the members of the Massachusetts Secondary Schools Athletic Directors Association (MSSADA), who last week voted Duxbury High School Athletic Director Thom Holdgate the 2009-2010 Athletic Director of the Year in Massachusetts.

"I was really surprised at being named the recipient of this award," said Holdgate. "A lot of times this is given to an AD that has done a great job over a period of time and is about to retire."

Holdgate was chosen from a group of outstanding nominees throughout the state by a selection committee comprised of a retired superintendent, a retired principal, and two retired athletic administrators with significant experience in the field at the local, district, state, and national levels.

Holdgate, who is in charge of the second largest athletic program on the South Shore, was a unanimous selection, having represented the state of Massachusetts at the Eastern Regional Athletic Director of The Year competition earlier this year.

A graduate of Brandeis

University with a B.A. in history and american studies, Holdgate also holds his M.S. in sports administration from Ohio University. He attained his certified athletic administrator's status in 2003 and his certified master athletic administrator's designation in 2007.

He was the director of athletics at Nantucket High School from 1999-2002 before leaving for Duxbury where he has served in a similar capacity since the fall of 2002.

During his tenure at Nantucket, Holdgate founded the Lighthouse Conference after the dissolution of the Cape and Islands League in 2002, and he has served as chairman of both the Cape and Islands League, as well as the Patriot League. He is also credited with starting halls of fame at Duxbury and Nantucket to honor achievements of alumni, coaches, and other contributors.

At the state level, Holdgate currently serves on the MIAA District C Committee, the Eligibility Review Board, and chairs the MIAA golf and softball committees, following stints on the MIAA Sportsmanship Committee from 200-2002. After serving as the secretary of MSSADA from 2007 through 2009, Holdgate is currently the organization's third vice president.

Holdgate has been recognized for his accomplishments with a number of awards that include being named the Patriot League and District C Athletic Director of the Year Award winner in 2009, as well



**WELL DESERVED:** DHS Athletic Director Thom Holdgate gives his acceptance speech to attendees at the MSSADA banquet.

as being named the District D nominee for the Ted Damko Award in 2003.

While watching over one of the most successful sports programs in the state, as well as being involved heavily in the organization, you have to wonder what makes Holdgate's involvement so beneficial to him and the DHS pro-

gram.

"When I first got the job I used to call athletic directors all the time just to get information on what they were doing that seemed successful. I was trying to find more resources. Now it seems that I am meeting more people because of our success."

continued on page 7

PEOPLE 6-K



Duxbury Superintendent of Schools Sue Skeiber was quoted as saying, "With all his affiliations, and as director of an athletic program that has won 15 state titles in seven different sports, one would wonder how does one person accomplish all of this? The answer is simple. Thom is an individual who is committed to a role that athletics can play in the lives of young men and women. He devotes his energies to providing them with the finest programs available. He is one of a kind and Duxbury is very fortunate to have someone like Thom directing its athletic program."

Even opposing AD Bill Johnson of Silver Lake had high praise for his car-pooling partner.

"I got to know Thom from riding with him to all of our MIAA and MSSADA meetings. I told him I did him a big favor by joining the Patriot League so he could get a couple of extra wins every season," Johnson said with a smile. "But I do have to say that Thom has been light years ahead of the rest of the athletic directors in the Patriot League with his understanding of technology. I can call Thom and ask him to get a consensus of how other ADs around the league feel about a subject and less than a minute later it

shows up in my e-mail. He is be typing away on his laptop at our meetings and the rest of us are there with notepads and pencils."

Holdgate was presented the award by Walter Sargent, the Executive Director of MSSADA, and he received a standing ovation from the crowd that included his parents, Joan and David Holdgate, along with his expectant wife, Megan.

A large contingent of current and former DHS administrators was on hand and included DHS Principal Andrew Stephans, former DHS Assistant Principal Ron McCarthy, Assistant Football Coach and varsity track coach Harry Taylor, DARE officer and girls' varsity hockey coach Friend Weiler, Assistant Principal Diana Meyers-Pachla, Assistant Principal Kathy Davis-McDonough, and DHS Physical Education teacher and Head Trainer Tim McPhillips.

"I would also like to thank all the parents and contributors to the DHS program that make my life easier," said Holdgate. "With all the financial restraints we have with the budget, they go the extra mile to make sure our athletes have everything they need to be competitive. Having a winning program certainly raises our profile out there and helps immensely in allowing me to win an award of this nature."



**A SHOW OF SUPPORT:** Duxbury coaches, administrators, and family were there for the award presentation. They included Harry Taylor, Friend Weiler, Andrew Stephans, Tim McPhillips, Thom Holdgate, Megan Holdgate, Joan Holdgate, David Holdgate, Kathy Davis-McDonough and Diana Meyers-Pachla.